

Letter from Prof. W.W. Mather, the geologist

133

LETTER FROM PROF. W. W. MATHER, THE GEOLOGIST.*

* [Prof. William Williams Mather Was born in Brooklyn, Conn, May 24, 1804. He was descended from ancestors of note in the Revolutionary and Colonial days in Now England. In 1828 he entered West Point as a Cadet rn July, 1829, he was breveted 2d Lieut in the Seventh Infantry. From 1829 to 1835 he was acting assistant Prof. of Chemistry and Mineralogy at West Point. He was appointed First Lieut. Dec. 1834 and resigned from the army Aug. 31, 1836. He was professor of Chemistry of the University of Louisiana, and Geologist of south eastern New York, from 1837 to 1844, State Geologist of Ohio, 1837, to 1840; of Kentucky, from 1838 to 1839; Prof. of Natural Sciences of the University of Ohio, 1842—1845, and in 1847 acting president of the same; He was a man of profound scientific attainments, principally as a geologist. He died at Columbus, Ohio, where he had resided several years, Feb. 26, 1859.-J. F. W.]

[FROM THE "ANNALS" OF 1851.]

Columbus, Ohio , Feb. 22d, 1851.

My Dear Sir : I received your letter informing me of my election as a member of the Minnesota Historical Society, and the accompanying pamphlet a few days since. It will give me great pleasure to aid the praiseworthy objects of your Society by ally means in my power. I will send a box of minerals and rocks illustrating the principal rocks and useful minerals as connected with geology, and some of my geological reports.

In 1835 I traveled through some parts of Wisconsin and Minnesota with Mr. Featherstonhaugh , and made many interesting observations on the geology, topography, &c., of that country, the report of which has not been published. We went from Mackinaw

Library of Congress

to Green Bay, where we procured a bark canoe and a crew of voyageurs, and ascended the Fox river, descended the Wisconsin, ascended the Mississippi to Fort Snelling, and thence up the St. Peters to the Terra Bleu river, ascended that stream a few miles to ascertain about the copper mines of the old French traveler, Le Sueur, found the green earth, but it contained no copper. We then descended the Terre Bleu, and ascended the St. Peters to Lac qui Parle, mostly by water; there hired horses and a horse cart for baggage, went across the prairies to Lac Travers, thence across the portage between Lac Travers, and the St. Peters, and westward, bearing a little to the north, to the Couteau de Prairie, thence south-eastward to Big Stone lake, and along the west side of that lake to its outlet; thence eastward and southward back to Lac qui Parle at Fort Renville, where Mr. Williamson and the missionary families of himself and Mr. — were then stationed. Mr. Featherstonhaugh thence descended by water, while I went across the prairies with the interpreter (old Milor, as he was called) to the Travers des Sioux. Mr. Sibley was kind enough to let this old interpreter go with Mr. Featherstonhaugh and myself; on that tour he was very useful to us. Mr. F. overtook me at Travers des Sioux with the canoe, and we descended to Fort Snelling, where we remained till the winter snows came, and then we descended by canoe to Galena, discharged our men, and took steamboat for St. Louis. My report of that expedition contains many matters of interest in relation to geology and the topography of that region; and my topographical sketch of the meanderings of the St. Peters has been appropriated by Mr. Featherstonhaugh in his report without acknowledgement. If I can procure that report, I will place it at the disposal of the Society, if they wish it.

I have the honor to be, Your obedient servant,

W. W. MATHER.